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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [KPAO](#) [AM](#) [AJ](#)
SUBJECT: GOAJ QUERIES ON USG STATEMENT REGARDING DECEMBER
10 REFERENDUM IN "NAGORNO-KARABAKH REPUBLIC"

Classified By: Ambassador Anne E. Derse per 1.4 (b,d).

11. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 3.

12. (SBU) Several senior GOAJ officials -- most recently Prosecutor General Zakir Garalov -- have asked us whether the U.S. intends to issue a statement rejecting the constitutional referendum scheduled to be held December 10 in the so-called "Nagorno Karabakh Republic." According to local press reports, the draft constitution states, inter alia, that the "Nagorno Karabakh Republic" is a sovereign, democratic, and law-abiding state, and notes that public authority is being exerted in the territory by the "Nagorno Karabakh Republic" until the territorial integrity of the "Nagorno Karabakh Republic" is restored. GOAJ officials and Azerbaijan's most influential analysts and journalists believe that there are strong similarities between the November 12 "independence referendum" in South Ossetia and the December 10 referendum in Nagorno Karabakh, and have noted that the U.S. rejected the South Ossetia referendum in a strongly worded statement.

13. (C) We urge the Department to issue a similar, strongly worded statement rejecting the December 10 referendum in the so-called "Nagorno Karabakh Republic." U.S. silence on the December 10 referendum will be interpreted by senior Azerbaijani officials -- as well as the general public -- as at best a weakening of, or at worst a fundamental change in, our long-standing policy of support for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. Public perceptions of a change in our long-standing policy on an issue as fundamental as this to Azerbaijanis will have serious, negative repercussions both for the Minsk Group process and for our ability to advance key U.S. interests in security, energy, and political and economic reform.

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